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SUBJECT: MGLBO1: LEBANON MONITORING GROUP SITUATION
REPORT NO. 19

TALKS HINGE ON HIZBALLAH WEAPONS; GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

¶1. (SBU) Druze leader Walid Jumblatt says March 14 is still waiting to see the Hizballah weapons paper developed by the Qatari PM. Amid shuttle diplomacy, Druze Telecom Minister Hamadeh said the opposition holds too many "hidden" cards, adding "we can't reward violence with a political victory." (Ops/Embassy Beirut e-mail)

¶2. (SBU) March 14 discussed at length a strategy whereby ordinary decisions could be taken quickly but important matters, such as war and peace, would be subject to approval by a broader majority. (Ops/Embassy Beirut e-mail)

PRESSURES ESCALATE; QATARIS REACH OUT TO REGIONAL PARTIES

13. (U) Majority Leader Saad Hariri threatened to pull out of the Doha talks unless an "honorable agreement" is reached. Meanwhile Free Patriotic Movement leader Michel Aoun confirmed he is staying in Qatar and will not pull out of the talks. (naharnet.com)

14. (SBU) Embassy Beirut reports the Qatari PM telephoned the Syrian president and Iranian officials to seek assistance in making the Doha Dialogue a success. Talks now focus on treating parliamentary elections law in a way that respects the concerns of all sides.

(Ops/ Embassy Beirut e-mail, Al-Hayat)

MARCH 14 INITIALLY APPROVES PROPOSAL

15. (U) The Qatari proposal calls for the election of Gen. Suleiman, postponement of the electoral law until after the presidential election, and formation of a national unity government. Speaker Berri tentatively agreed pending consultation with Hizballah. (naharnet.com)

AIRPORT OPEN TO COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS

16. (SBU) Hizballah has more presence than usual in the access roads, with street activity returning to some sense of normalcy. (Ops/Embassy Beirut telcon)

17. (U) Minimize considered.

RICE